

BLACK HAWK CREWS TEST NEW AIRCRAFT SURVIVABILITY SYSTEM. SEE PAGE 11

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PHOTO BY SPC. MICHAEL RISINGER

Army National Guardsmen drop water from a UH-60 Black Hawk onto a wildfire at Montana Creek near Talkeetna, Alaska, July 4.

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WOCC inducts 22nd member of distinguished society

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WELCOME HOME

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Rucker welcomes new commander

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker welcomed its new garrison commander during a change of command ceremony July 12 in the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Col. Whitney B. Gardner assumed command of the garrison from Col. Brian E. Walsh when he accepted the unit colors from Vincent E. Grewatz, director of Installation Management Command – Training, who officiated the event.

Gardner said he and his family were excited about the opportunity to lead at Fort Rucker.

“I’ve been blown away by the welcome we’ve received from the garrison team and everyone here at Fort Rucker,” the new commander said. “I love coming through the gates at Fort Rucker, and I love hearing the gate guards tell me, ‘Welcome home!’ Having been away for so long and making that long trip from the Pentagon, to hear those words was very powerful. It feels good to be home – it’s a special place and we have a critical mission.

“I feel prepared, I’ve had a great onboarding, and looking around and based on my experience with the staff so far, we’re in a great position and we’ve got the support of our mission commander,” Gardner added. “Brian Walsh has commanded for the past two years and he built a really committed team. You’ve worked together to make it a world-class facility and installation. We’re ready to go to work.”

And that mission commander, Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, made known his support of the new commander.

“We have served together many times in the past, and if I had to handpick a person to come down and do this job, Whitney would be the one,” the general said. “I look forward to serving and commanding with you. And to the Fort Rucker community and garrison, you have a great leader coming in to take the reins here today. I am fully confident that we will continue to build on the success that Team Walsh built for us here at Fort Rucker.”

And Gardner intends to do just that.

“Melissa and I didn’t grow up as kids here at Fort Rucker, but what we did do is grow up as adults here,” Gardner said. “I’m going to remind myself of that every day. These young Soldiers here are doing the same thing – they’re growing up as adults. Our team is going to be more committed than ever to making sure that we take care and provide the best support possible for our young sons and daughters, and little brothers and little sisters. We need to make sure they are ready for the near and future fight.”

He also spoke about the garrison staff and its importance to maintaining Aviation readiness.

“It’s known that we have one of the most stable civilian workforces in the Army, and I see that as a huge strength,” Gardner said. “And I want to continue investing in that workforce – they are essential to our daily operations. But we also need to avoid getting



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Col. Whitney B. Gardner assumes command of the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Rucker from Col. Brian E. Walsh as he accepts the unit's colors from Vincent E. Grewatz, director of Installation Management Command – Training, during a change of command ceremony July 12 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

stuck in the old ways of doing things – we need to broaden our views and find better ways to solve complex problems.”

He added that he is grateful for the chance to take on the Fort Rucker garrison mission of supporting and enabling Army Aviation readiness.

“We, as a garrison team, must take some simple basic actions,” Gardner said. “We will always, one, do no harm – we will make no decisions or put actions in motion that will hurt Soldiers, family members or the environment. We will always, two, do as much good as we can – we will remain engaged, and we will look for opportunities to improve the quality of life and the quality of training at Fort Rucker.

“And, three, we will adhere to the regulations and policies that exist to support our Soldiers and families – we will look for opportunities to improve those processes that enable the required power generation and combat generation and increase production of combat power, going forward,” he said. “I’m thrilled to start this next chapter.”

The IMCOM – Training director took time to thank Walsh for his work over the past two years.

“The greatest legacy of this command team will be the people and the partnerships they forged over the last two years, and on this account Colonel Walsh is a remarkable leader,” Grewatz said. “He postured the garrison for continued success, and built a committed, responsive and agile garrison team capable of accomplishing the mission today and tomorrow.”

And Walsh spoke about that Fort Rucker team, referring to it as talented and award-winning.

“You can have the best equipment in the world, and that’s great, but at the end of the day if you don’t have the best people, it doesn’t matter,” he said. “And we have the best people. And that’s evidenced by the awards and what they produce here daily. Together our garrison team and community partners have produced some remarkable things, and those folks make this a great place to work, live and play.

“To the Gardners, congratulations on taking command of the best garrison in the U.S. Army,” he added. “You’re certainly the right pick for this garrison and I know you’ll lead them to the next level – you’re in good hands and you have a great team.”

STRENGTH IN KNOWLEDGE

Warrant Officer Career College conducts change of command

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The new commandant of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College assumed command of the unit on the same day as his 23rd wedding anniversary.

Brig. Gen. Stephen J. Maranian, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, recognized that fact when he thanked Col. Ross F. Nelson's wife, Jennifer, for sharing her husband during the ceremony where he assumed command from Col. Kelly E. Hines July 25 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

"This is a very special day, and I wish you both many, many more to come," Maranian said. "Colonel Ross Nelson is an outstanding leader with impeccable credentials as an Army Aviator and as an educator. He is a U.S. Military Academy graduate who has performed with distinction all of the leadership and technical positions you'd expect of a master aviator, including commanding the 1st Battalion, 212th Aviation Regiment at Fort Rucker.

"On the education side, he's completed every professional military education program up to the war college level," he continued. "He's also served as a trainer and coach for the mission command training program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and as a pro-

fessor of military science at the University of South Dakota. Along the way, he earned two master's degrees to go along with his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering that he earned at West Point."

And Nelson said he is ready to take on the challenge of leading the WOCC, and understands he's inheriting an elite organization.

"To the WOCC staff, cadre and family members, your work here truly touches all corners of the Army and you have a tremendous reputation," Nelson said. "Jennifer and I are excited to be joining the team, and cannot wait to meet and work with each of you. Strength in Knowledge, This We'll Defend."

Maranian reminded Nelson and everyone in attendance of the importance of the WOCC mission and its impact on the Army as a whole.

"This institution, the USAWOCC, is an immensely important command. It's the home of the Army warrant officer," he said. "It serves as the training ground for both warrant officer candidates and returning senior warrant officers, and is the proponent for common core warrant officer training across the Army.

"With more than 26,000 warrant officers serving in 17 Army branches comprising 67 specialties, this college impacts the Army in every corner of the world in which we serve," Maranian added. "The three professional



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Col. Ross F. Nelson assumes command of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College from Col. Kelly E. Hines as he accepts the unit colors from Brig. Gen. Stephen J. Maranian, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, during a change of command ceremony July 25 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

military education courses taught here, along with the many warrant officer basic and advanced courses taught at branch schools around the Army, qualify the professionals of the Army Warrant Officer population. Today is as much, if not more, about the unit and that cohort than it is about the individuals who are assuming and departing command."

He then took time to recognize Hines and his wife, Shannon, for their efforts in leading the WOCC.

"Kelly and his bride, Shannon, have been the consummate command team serving our Army for 34 years as a Soldier, and leading the Soldiers of our Army, his branch and now of this school. Kelly has exhibited a passion for his Soldiers as he's excelled in the challenges of command," Maranian said. "He led the college to design, develop and implement a transformed educational construct to the Army's warrant officer cohort – no small task.

"Intelligent, a visionary leader and an innovative educator, Kelly has skillfully fos-

tered a disciplined training and educational climate that ultimately served to deliver the caliber of quality education needed to ensure that the current and future warrant officer cohorts are agile, adaptive and critical thinkers, and that they are and aspire to be worthy role models and leaders of character, confidence and commitment for our Army," he continued. "Kelly has proven himself to be a genuine steward of the Army profession. Because of his superb leadership qualities he's left a tremendous legacy of excellence carried forward by the many students of this institution that will have an impact on the Army for decades to come."

Hines, though, laid much of the credit for the unit's success under his leadership at the feet of the cadre and staff of the WOCC.

"These last two years since I took command, the cadre of the USAWOCC has trained over 6,000 students, with nearly 4,000 new WO1s. They accomplished this feat with less than a hundred cadre and did it in spite of an old colonel's constant injects

COMMANDANT *cont.*

and my opinions – let that sink in,” he said. “Where else in the Army can so few claim they impacted so many? I daresay not since the Spartans faced the Persians so long ago.”

He added that while the education piece of the WOCC mission carried out by the Soldiers and civilians on the staff has a profound impact on the Army, it is the mentorship they provide to the students that is even more important.

“They established a legacy that will last as long as there is a U.S. Army, they did it without much recognition, they did it quietly and they did it professionally,” Hines said. “Please join me in round of applause for the

warrant officers, NCOs and civilians who are the heart of the USAWOCC.”

The retiring colonel also thanked his many coworkers and family for their support throughout the years, and expressed his confidence in Nelson taking the unit forward.

“We’ve known y’all about 20 years and we’ve been stationed together a couple of times,” he said. “I could not have personally picked anybody better to take this college from me. I am very happy you’re doing it. You’re getting an awesome group of people and I know you’re going to outshine me right away.”



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

NEW COMMANDER

CW4 Angelique J. Hoskins assumes command of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College 1st Warrant Officer Company from CW4 Olga Elliott after accepting the unit colors from Col. Kelly E. Hines, commandant of the WOCC, during a change of command ceremony July 12 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.



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110th Avn. Bde. welcomes new leader

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Soldiers of 110th Aviation Brigade welcomed their new brigade commander during a ceremony on Howze Field here July 17.

Col. George G. Ferido, incoming commander, assumed command of the brigade from outgoing commander Col. Chad E. Chasteen during the ceremonial passing of the unit colors signifying the official transfer of authority.

Ceremony host Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, thanked the audience for their support across multiple recent changes of command on post, and welcomed the Ferido family.

"As we bid farewell to team Chasteen, we welcome another superb command team to lead the Warrior brigade as Col. George Ferido assumes command," Francis said.

"George's experience in peacetime and in combat is on target as this brigade continues to execute its critical mission. George and Janet, I know the families and friends of 110th are eager to embrace your family and continue to build on the success that the Chasteens have built here," Francis said.

No stranger to Fort Rucker, Ferido's most recent assignment was director of USAACE's Directorate of Training and Doctrine.

His previous assignments include the assistant program manager for Aviation for the Saudi Army National Guard in Saudi Arabia, and the secretary of the general staff for U.S. Army Pacific Command.

Ferido served multiple times in Hawaii, including as commander of the 2-6 Cavalry Squadron, 25th Infantry Division, and he previously served as the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade deputy S3 and later as the squadron operations officer for 2-6 CAV in

Iraq.

In Korea, he served as 2nd CAB deputy brigade commander and previously on the 2nd Infantry Division staff as chief of training and exercise in the G3.

Ferido served at Fort Irwin, Calif. with the Eagle Team (aviation observer controllers), Operations Group at the National Training Center. As part of the aviation observer controller team, he served as an after action review analyst, company commander trainer, and battalion executive officer trainer.

He served at Fort Hood, Texas with 2nd Armored Division which was later reflagged to the 4th Infantry Division. While at Fort Hood, Ferido held multiple positions prior to the entire battalion moving to Hawaii. He served as B Company, 1-25th Aviation company commander and deployed his unit to Bosnia to perform the Standardization Force mission.

During his remarks, Ferido thanked his family for traveling from Hawaii to Alabama for the change of command.

"I'm humbled and honored to stand here before you today. Although the passing of colors between two leaders signifies the authority and responsibility, it's the folks on the field that deserve all the recognition," Ferido said.

He thanked Chasteen for the smooth transition, and focused on the job at hand.

"We'll train the next generation of combat aviators through new technologies with a warfighting focus to make sure our ground commanders get the best aviation support they need," Ferido said.

Francis also thanked the Chasteens for their service.

"It's appropriate that we call them a command team, it's amazing what we ask of our spouses," Francis said. "Jess, we're truly in-



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Col. George G. Ferido, incoming commander of the 110th Aviation Brigade, receives the unit colors from Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, as Col. Chad E. Chasteen relinquishes command in a ceremony on Howze Field July 17.

debted to you for your exceptional commitment and selfless service."

Francis commended Chasteen for his charismatic leadership.

"Chad led this brigade with character, competence and commitment that we expect of our senior leaders. He always leads from the front, always delivering on the seemingly unrealistic expectations we have of this unit," Francis said.

With more than 500 aircraft, and training approximately 4,000 aviators per year, the brigade flies a quarter of the Army's flying hour program, carrying a daily training load of more than 900 students and launching 300 to 400 sorties per day. The brigade trains aviators and non-rated crew members for the Army and allied nations. It also provides air ambulance support the USAACE and surrounding communities, serves as the night vision goggle device training and operations staff agency for the Department of the Army, and trains air traffic controllers to manage complex airspace, Francis explained.

"That is truly remarkable--the scale and scope of this effort and what this brigade does every day is without compare anywhere in the world in any institution that trains avi-

ators. And that's just an average day," Francis said.

Chasteen also optimized initial entry rotary wing training and other courses through the Aviation Warfighting Initiative. He partnered with the U.S. Air Force Pilot Training Next program to develop the Army version, Aviator Training Next, which uses virtual reality training to "produce an even better aviator using technology that is just emerging as we speak," Francis said.

Chasteen reflected with gratitude over his military journey.

"I thank God for helping me survive cancer, combat and command and staff, and for giving me the opportunity to serve my country for so long," Chasteen said.

He thanked his family for their support, and also the brigade for their accomplishments.

"Today is really about all the men and women that comprise the 110th, the Warrior brigade. This is their ceremony," Chasteen said. "No other unit in the Army or the world flies more or does it better.... I challenge you to continue evolving, make this great unit even better."



ABOVE THE BEST

Fort Rucker plays key role in commission's efforts to improve aviation safety

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker is playing a key role in helping the nation and the Department of Defense reduce future military aviation mishaps.

Members of the Congress-established National Commission on Military Aviation Safety visited the post to meet with U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence officials July 23-24 in order to get a firsthand and detailed look at Army Aviation training, according to retired Gen. Richard A. Cody, chairman of the commission.

While at Fort Rucker, the commission was also able to meet with U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center and U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory officials for detailed looks into aviation safety and aviation medical research, as well, Cody added.

"Excellent," is how the chairman described the two-day visit to the home of Army Aviation. "This visit is important because this is where Army aviators undergo initial flight training on the AH-64 Apache, UH-60 Black Hawk, UH-72 Lakota, CH-47 Chinook and the C-12 Huron."

The input and information gleaned from the Fort Rucker visit will pay big dividends for the commission's work, according to Cody, who said Congress established the commission last year to conduct a comprehensive review of military aviation mishaps occurring between 2013 and 2018 to reveal trends, identify shortcomings and highlight best practices.



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, Fort Rucker and USAACE commanding general, walks with retired Gen. Richard A. Cody, who visited Fort Rucker July 23-24 as chairman of the National Commission on Military Aviation Safety, at Cairns Army Airfield before an aerial tour of stagefields.

"The commission is examining the full range of man, train and equip issues associated with aviation safety," Cody said. "The commission is looking for aggregate trends from previous mishaps, including lessons learned and how they are incorporated into current operations, training and maintenance procedures."

The commission is also reviewing orga-

nizational and supervisory influence, human factors, training, physiological effects, maintenance, operational tempo and budgetary constraints, the retired general said, adding that the commission is aiming to provide its final report on how to improve aviation safety and readiness to Congress in March.

During their Fort Rucker visit, commission members met with Maj. Gen. David J.

Francis, Fort Rucker and USAACE commanding general; took in a UH-60 instrument class at Cairns Army Airfield where they observed students and instructor pilots; visited five stagefields; were briefed on aviation training; toured simulators and virtual reality training resources; and Cody spoke with students at the captains career course.

"I put my commissioner's hat on, and I talked to them because these are going to be the next company and troop commanders," he said. "I asked them quite a few questions about how they feel about the training they get from Fort Rucker and how well they were able to do going to their units – if that training got them ready for success. I got very positive answers, which I expected."

The commission also spent time at the CRC getting briefed on the different ways the Army is not only looking at and investigating the Class A through C mishaps, but also looking at predictive analysis and causal factors, Cody said.

"I'm very impressed with that," he said.

The commission members also visited USAARL, "which I think is a gem of a capability," Cody said. "We took a look ahead at the physiological aspect – everything from helmets and seats, as well as cognitive decision making crew coordination overload, and all of those types of things. I hadn't been there in about four or five years. I'm impressed with USAARL and what they are doing. It's been a very good visit."

And it won't be the last one, he added.

While the commission is visiting various other military operational commands, flight training centers and maintenance facilities,

SAFETY *cont.*

PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Members of the National Commission on Military Aviation Safety observe a student preflight brief in a classroom at Cairns.

and even looking for best practices in the civil aviation industry, Cody fully expects they will be back at Fort Rucker.

"I've had my executive director down here three times already," he said. "This is my first visit as the commissioner, but I'll be coming back and probably sending people back. We'll probably come back and forth a couple of times to make sure we got it right and give people the time to say, 'Geez, you know what, last time we briefed you on this and you asked some of these questions. We've taken a look at it and this is what we think.' It will be a continual process until we actually put pen to paper to start writing the report."

Cody said he expects that report to have a profound impact on the future of military aviation.

"We have great expertise across our eight commissioners, but, more importantly, we've assembled a team of subject matter experts that have been doing this type of work in other arenas," he said. "We're taking a look at these mishap rates, everything from jets all the way to training helicopters and every-

thing in between.

"What we're seeing is no new accidents, from our experience, just more people having accidents," Cody added. "We're looking at how we can take this data and look at the causal factors, look at training, look at organizational op-tempo, look at the physiological aspects, materiel, maintenance, and the

currency requirements versus proficiency requirements across the services and across the aircrews.

"We also are looking at the funding and resourcing – not just the resourcing of parts, fuel and aircraft, but also crew resourcing in critical areas," the chairman said. "Our goal is to provide some insights as to where we need to improve across DOD in terms of funding, resourcing, new technologies and training. And what we're finding is the services are already doing a lot of this stuff – they're looking at all of these things."

By providing an outside-looking-in perspective, Cody said the commission's overall goal is simple – improve aviation safety.

"We hope to be able to stop one accident – one accident is one too many," he said. "We hope that we're able to provide Congress, DOD, the service leadership and, just as importantly, the people on the flightline, some lessons learned and some experiential data points to raise the level of safety awareness to a level that everybody gets better and we avoid some of these catastrophic accidents. We're looking at it through that lens."



PHOTO BY BRYAN WHITMAN

Francis and Cody speak with a Soldier about aviation training at Fort Rucker.

FORT RUCKER MOVIE SCHEDULE

FOR AUGUST 1-17

Thursday, August 1

Shaft (R) 7 p.m.

Friday, August 2

Shaft (R) 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 3

The Secret Life of Pets 2 (PG) 4 p.m.

Rocketman (R) 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 4

The Secret Life of Pets 2 (PG) 1 p.m.

Men in Black: International (PG-13) 4 p.m.

Thursday, August 8

Men in Black: International (PG-13) 4 p.m.

Friday, August 9

Godzilla: King of the Monsters (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 10

The Secret Life of Pets 2 (PG) 4 p.m.

Crawl (R) 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 12

The Secret Life of Pets 2 (PG) 1 p.m.

Spider-Man: Far From Home (PG-13) 4 p.m.

Wednesday, August 14

The Angry Birds Movie 2 (PG) 4 & 7 p.m.

Thursday, August 15

The Angry Birds Movie 2 (PG) 7 p.m.

Friday, August 16

The Angry Birds Movie 2 (PG) 4 & 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 17

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‘WARRIORS EVERY ONE’

TRADOC selects Best Warrior Soldier, NCO

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

After a grueling four days of competition in the heat of lower Alabama summertime, two competitors rose to the top in the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Best Warrior competition held at Fort Rucker July 15-18.

Spc. Thomas U. Massengill, a religious affairs specialist with 1st Battalion, 30th Field Artillery Regiment, U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was named the TRADOC Best Warrior Soldier of the Year. This year's TRADOC Best Warrior Non-commissioned Officer of the Year is Staff Sgt. Dakota A. Bowen, a drill sergeant with 3rd Battalion, 39th Infantry Regt., U.S. Army Training Center, Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

During an awards ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum July 19, ceremony host Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, U.S. Army Aviation Branch command sergeant major, praised the competitors for their efforts personally and professionally.

"These warriors over the course of this week displayed the courage, confidence, strength, aggressiveness, discipline, bravery, candor, competitiveness and teamwork inherent to and widely accepted as warrior traits," Hauke said.

At some point every competitor questioned their ability and whether they could go on, he explained.

"But yet here you are, conquered the battle, warriors every one," he said.



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

The 2019 TRADOC Best Warrior Non-commissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year, Sgt. Dakota A. Bowen and Spc. Thomas U. Massengill pose for a photo after winning the four-day competition held July 15-18 at Fort Rucker. Bowen is a drill sergeant assigned to 3rd Battalion, 39th Infantry Regt., U.S. Army Training Center, Fort Jackson, S.C., and Massengill is a religious affairs specialist assigned to 1st Battalion, 30th Field Artillery Regiment, Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Okla.

Hauke thanked cadre and family members for their support, including the team at Fort Benning, Georgia, that supported the events held there on Day 2 of the competition.

Throughout the week, Hauke, along with Sgt. Maj. Shawn C. McKay, USAACE G-3 sergeant major, conducted Facebook live events to connect with families and the public.

Shortly after arriving on Sunday, and receiving their packets and overall guidance from McKay, the competitors rallied at The Landing Zone where they were welcomed by Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general.

Francis said he was proud of all of the competitors "for making the cut to be here. It says a lot about you, your character, your fitness, your aptitude and your skills."

Since USAACE hosted this year's event, some Aviation flavor was included in the competition, Francis explained.

In addition to the sights and sounds of Army aircraft training in the skies overhead at Fort Rucker during the weeklong meet, multiple events included downed-aircraft scenarios. The competitors also climbed on-board a Chinook for transport to and from Fort Benning for some events held there.

The competitors also received words of wisdom from Hauke and the TRADOC command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy A. Guden, who commended USAACE for the hard work preparing for the event and welcomed competitors.

"Every single one of you should be down here with the desire to conquer it, take it over,

BEST WARRIOR *cont.*

own it,” Guden said. “That’s the mindset you have to have when you come to this level.”

Soldiers’ mental and physical mettle was tested across a variety of challenges, beginning on the first day of competition with a daytime land navigation event, the urban operations course, uniform inspection and verbal quizzing by a board of command sergeants major from across TRADOC and land navigation at night.

On Day 2, they faced multiple swim events, an unknown distance run, obstacle course, tomahawk throw and the range, among other events all held on Fort Benning.

Soldiers returned to Fort Rucker again via Chinook to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Tabernacle Stage Field, where they experienced a taste of survival, evasion, resistance and escape training by learning and testing their fire building skills.

They learned how to make their own shelter there and that was their home for the night.

Day 3 started with an early 12-mile road march, then moved on to the break contact range where competitors reacted to a downed aircraft scenario, extracted a casualty, engaged targets, and evacuated the casualty to a safe location to continue medical exam and call in the medevac support.

The day continued with weapons proficiency and a stress shoot where competitors engaged targets using a variety of weapons.

Day 4 included the Army Combat Fitness Test, followed by the culminating event for the weeklong competition – a combatives tournament at the Fortenberry-Colton Fitness Center, a spectator event where the competitors’ hand-to-hand combat skills were put to the test as fellow Soldiers and leaders cheered them on.

According to the winners, the ruck march was their toughest event.

“Body was hurting, and then we still had more to do after that,” Massengill said. “It was just overcoming the hurt and just keep going.”

Because both are from the South, the Alabama heat and humidity was no surprise.

“We just did a lot of training during the day in the heat of the day, to make sure I was prepared for this competition,” Bowen said of his preparation at Fort Jackson.

The winners said they were grateful for the win.

“Everything I do, I do it as if I’m doing it for God,” said Massengill.

He said he appreciated the support of family and friends, his unit and Fort Sill for preparing him, his fellow competitors he was able to get to know and to all who provided the gifts at the ceremony.

Bowen said he was excited to know family could connect via social media and he was grateful for friends who made the trip for the ceremony, as well as the camaraderie among the competitors.

“I saw a lot of NCOs mentoring the Soldiers here and then each other. We were helping each other out and it was pretty awesome,” Bowen said.

Both Hauke and McKay noted several personal victories they witnessed during the week.

One competitor pushed past the point where he thought he needed to quit and later came back to thank McKay for his encouragement.

Others faced their fears and a few of them encountered poisonous snakes in the woods. Despite the obstacles, the competitors never gave up.

“No matter how tough it is out there, they were still giving it,” McKay said.

Massengill and Bowen will now advance to compete at the Army-level competition.

ACLC Soldier competes at AMC Best Warrior Competition

By Kate Loftin
AMCOM Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL – A maintainer assigned to Aviation Center Logistics Command at Fort Rucker represented U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command in the Army Materiel Command Best Warrior Competition.

Staff Sgt. Shane Gratton, quality assurance evaluator at Cairns Army Airfield, was among AMC’s best -- 13 NCOs and three Soldiers -- competing for the title of AMC NCO of the Year.

The grueling three-day competition held at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, July 16-18, included a 12-mile road march, land navigation course, marksmanship ranges, and Warrior tasks and battle drills. Each event was designed to determine how well the competitors could adapt to challenging, changing situations in an unknown and often hostile environment.

“My experience with the AMC Best Warrior Competition was one of the more physically challenging things I have ever done in my 20-plus year career,” Gratton said. “What made the experience all the better was the professionalism of the cadre that hosted the event, as well as the competitive motivation of the other competitors. I would encourage any Soldier to put themselves to the test and participate in future competitions. The experience will not only make them better Soldiers, but will also prove to themselves that they are way more capable than they believe themselves to be.”

Gratton volunteered to compete as part of his continuous professional development as an NCO. Five Soldiers and NCOs



PHOTO BY KATE LOFTIN

Staff Sgt. Shane Gratton, an aviation maintainer assigned to the Aviation Center Logistics Command, speaks with Sgt. Major Mike Muller, AMCOM G3 sergeant major, and Maj. Gen. Todd Royar, AMCOM commanding general, during the AMC Best Warrior Competition Award luncheon July 19.

competed in the AMCOM Best Warrior Competition, but Gratton was the only AMCOM competitor to compete in the AMC competition.

“Staff Sergeant Gratton always leads by example,” said Sgt. Maj. Jerry Cowart, ACLC sergeant major. “He produces results with any task assigned to him. His consistent display of teamwork and selfless service highlight the best of our NCO Corps, demonstrating to his fellow Soldiers a contagious enthusiasm for excellence. I am proud to have him serving on our ACLC team.”

Gratton was recognized along with his fellow competitors at the 2019 Army Materiel Command Best Warrior Competition Award Luncheon July 19 at Redstone Arsenal.

At the award luncheon, Maj. Gen. Todd Royar, AMCOM commanding general, commended Gratton on his performance at the competition and his leadership role at ACLC.

EAGLE RISING

WOCC, MOAA induct 22nd member into distinguished society

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College and Military Officers Association of America officials inducted the Order of the Eagle Rising Society's 22nd member during a ceremony July 10 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Retired CW5 Paul E. Merchant, who served in the Army from 1968 to 2012, is truly a "franchise player," according to retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, MOAA president and CEO, and also guest speaker for the event.

"This recognition is really from senior leaders, subordinates and peers – that's us, saying that one of our family members really deserves this recognition," Atkins said. "And certainly Mr. Merchant does – when you look at his biography write-up, it's just amazing. After reading it, I thought, this is different, this is a bit of a standout here – his was not just a singular career path."

Atkins continued by saying that football teams need a top franchise player to reach the Super Bowl, and that, for the Army, "Mr. Merchant is that franchise player."

Merchant's multi-faceted military career began in 1968 as an infantryman who quickly found himself in Vietnam being sent into tunnels "to see if there was anything bad in there," according to Atkins.

Then, one day while doing a hot extraction, "I guess he came off the battlefield in full combat uniform, sweaty, stinky, all that

kind of stuff, and he jumps into a helicopter and slides along the floor, and then underneath the seat in front of him he sees a pair of really shiny boots," the MOAA president said of Merchant. "And he goes, 'Oh, that's what I want to do – no more of this stuff, I want to be the person sitting there with the shiny boots.'"

Thus the groundwork was laid for a long career in Army Aviation and a lifetime of service, the retired general said, adding that Merchant accumulated 1,200 combat assault flight hours, and serving in Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, Germany, Iraq and even in the Azores as a commander of a U.S. Army tugboat.

And that service continues to this day as Merchant serves his fellow veterans as the Oklahoma Air and Army National Guard Veterans Affairs liaison officer, where he works to ensure veterans receive the help they need from the country they served, Atkins added.

"In MOAA, we have a bumper sticker that reads, 'Never stop serving,' and Paul Merchant is that individual who never stops serving," he said. "It is my privilege and my honor, Paul, to award you the Order of the Eagle Rising Society Award. You are certainly the standout, you are certainly at the head of your class, and you certainly lead by example. Paul, congratulations."

Ceremony host Col. Kelly E. Hines, WOCC commandant, also had glowing words for the newest member of the society.

"In you, we find dedication and sacrifice



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, MOAA president and CEO, and Col. Kelly E. Hines, WOCC commandant, induct retired CW5 Paul E. Merchant into the Order of the Eagle Rising Society during a ceremony July 10 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

that must be recognized, and a shining example of what a warrant officer should be. It's impressive what you've done," Hines said. "I tell all of our senior warrant officers that what I want out of them is to be the warrant officer that the candidates want to be when they grow up. And you definitely are the warrant officer that all warrant officers want to be when they grow up."

The guest of honor had very few words to say on his induction, mainly just thanking WOCC and MOA officials for the honor, along with his family and comrades for their support over the years, only adding that it was hard for him to hear so many singing his

praises.

"I think it was over the top – it's embarrassing when it happens and I'm no good at it," Merchant said. "Warrant officers were once known as the quiet professionals. But who's ever known a quiet warrant officer? We're not typically quiet, nor should we be. And while I question my professionalism at times, I do know when it is time to be quiet, and this is it."

He did leave the crowd with some final words, though. "It's a question of not where you've been, but where you're going."

Black Hawk aviation crews test new Army aircraft survivability system

By Sgt. 1st Class Leonel Rubio
For Army News Service

REDSTONE ARSENAL -- The latest countermeasures designed to improve Army aircraft survivability were tested here by helicopter aircrews based out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Soldiers from the 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment belonging to 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, with Fort Hood's 1st Cavalry Division deployed to Redstone Test Center to fly UH-60M Black Hawks equipped with Common Infrared Countermeasures.

According to CW4 Toby Blackmon, a test officer with the U.S. Army Operational Test Command's Aviation Test Directorate, CIRCUM operational testing provides data on an improved countermeasure system with upgrades that greatly improve on the current Common Missile Warning System that has been used for years on Army aircraft while deployed.

"Due to the evolving battlefield threats, the CIRCUM comes at a pivotal time for Army aviation in order to improve the survivability of our crews that will be deploying in support of combat operations," said Blackmon.

The CIRCUM takes advantage of the current aircraft backbone and integrates itself with existing aircraft systems, while displaying within the Pilot Vehicle Interface which displays aircraft systems messages for the pilot.

A test team of aviators, Army civilians, and contractors partnered with aircrews from the U.S. Army Redstone Test Center Aviation Flight Test Directorate to carry out the CIRCUM test.

Aircrews first received New Equipment Training from the Product Manager (Infra-



PHOTO BY CW4 TOBY BLACKMON

An aircrew from the 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division taxis out of the Redstone Test Center Airfield at Redstone Arsenal to an air assault mission during operational testing of the Common Infrared Countermeasures.

red) IR Countermeasures (based at Redstone Test Center, Redstone Arsenal) prior to conducting flights.

"It is imperative the aircrews have a clear understanding of how to employ the system correctly before we send them up in the air to conduct missions," said Dave Rogers, CIRCUM assistant test officer with AVTD.

Crews conducted eight missions yielding over 40 hours of test data, which consisted of air assault, air movement and aeromedical evacuation missions in both day and night environments.

CIRCUM test events were designed to test the system under an operationally realistic environment while providing the test unit with training and support to improve overall readiness.

"We designed the test events to cover

all the potential environments that aircrews may find themselves in," said Blackmon.

To deliver that realistic operational threat environment, the U.S. Army's Center for Countermeasures provided a Multi-Spectral Sea and Land Target Simulator to engage the aircrews as they performed the missions, forcing the test unit to react and employ tactics, techniques and procedures as if they were conducting combat operations.

"I could have not asked for a better test unit than the 3-227th guys," said Blackmon. "They exemplify what an Army aviator should be.

"From planning and executing the missions to the invaluable feedback provided to the test team, the data collected from the post mission surveys will provide a real assessment on the strengths and weaknesses of

the system," he added.

Pilots and crew received critical training during the test event.

"The test has provided training that has made a positive impact on unit readiness and will put us ahead of the curve when the system gets fielded," said 1st Lt. Peter Zeidler, 3-227th test unit officer-in-charge.

One pilot in command, CW2 Shane V. Alcock said, "I like the feature of having another countermeasure that can defeat an infrared threat."

The Army Evaluation Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, will leverage data gathered from CIRCUM testing to support an Operational Evaluation Report.

Additionally, CIRCUM testing will inform a 3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2020 Full Rate Production decision for the Army.

FROM DFMWR



Visit Fort Rucker Army Community Service on Facebook for a calendar of our activities!

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Child and youth services' parent advisory council meetings give parents the opportunity to provide input about administrative policies and developmental programming for CYS services and establish volunteer opportunities. PAC meetings are held quarterly, with the next taking place Aug. 6 from 5-6 p.m. at the child development center, Bldg. 8938.

For more information, call 255-9638 or 255-0621.

EMPLOYMENT READINESS WORKSHOP

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend the next employment readiness program workshop Aug. 8 from 9-11:30 a.m. at Bldg. 5700. Patrons will meet in Rm. 350 at 8:45 a.m. for paperwork and attendance prior to the session. You'll get the essentials about how to conduct a successful job campaign, to include crafting a winning resume, prepping for job interviews and other helpful tips. Advance registration is required.

For more information and to reserve your seat, call 255-2594.

ACTIVE PARENTING: TEEN

The Fort Rucker Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program will host its next Active Parenting: Teen workshop Aug. 9 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Bldg. 5700, Rm. 350. Parenting is patience. ACS will be offering parenting classes for parents with children of all ages. Parenting can be a challenging yet fulfilling responsibility. Most parents do not receive any type of training. ACS provides parents with the essential tools necessary to be a more effective parent at any age of their child's life. Remember, parenting is about making life better for your children,

not being a better parent. Instructors use the Active Parenting curriculum.

For more information, or to register for one of the upcoming classes, call 255-3359 or 255-9805.

BACK TO SCHOOL CERAMICS

The Fort Rucker Arts and Crafts Center will host its Back to School Ceramics Day Aug. 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. featuring back-to-school ceramic crafts. For additional details, call 255-9020.

FORT RUCKER FUN RUN, RESILIENCY FAIR 5K

The Fortenberry-Colton Physical Fitness Center will host the Fort Rucker Fun Run and Resiliency Fair Aug. 10 at 9 a.m. The free event offers a 5K fun run along with fun activities for the entire family. Participants can run or walk, or just stop by to visit the numerous resiliency fair booths. The event promotes resiliency for the Fort Rucker community and will showcase information to improve physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing. The event is open to the public, and is stroller and leashed-pet friendly.

For more information, call 255-2296. People can pre-register at either PFC or MWR Central.

READY, SET, RUN! REGISTRATION

Fort Rucker Youth Sports and Fitness is offering an opportunity for youth to achieve something that most adults can't do, to spend time with friends chatting and exercising, and to be a part of a national program featured on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter with its Ready, Set, Run! program. This is an opportunity for youth, ages 8-13 years old, to be a part of a national running program that focuses on character development and phys-

ical training for a 5k run.

The program equips youth with the physical training and goal-setting mentality needed to accomplish their running goals. Issues like enhancing confidence and self-esteem, respecting authority, dealing with peer pressure and fueling their bodies through proper nutrition are covered during the 12-week session. Above all, the youth have a blast seeing what they are capable of achieving.

The youth will participate in three runs throughout the 12-week session. Cost is \$30 and registration continues until Aug. 15. The season will be Aug. 19 to Nov. 16. All of the runs will be on Fort Rucker.

For more information, call 255-2254 or 255-9105.

FALL SOCCER REGISTRATION

Registration for youth fall soccer runs through Aug. 15. Practices for soccer start on Aug. 19. Cost is \$25 for ages 3-4 and \$45 for ages 5-14. Children must meet the age requirements and the age groups are: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14. Youth must be registered members with child and youth services, and have a current sports physical to register. There will be a parents meeting Aug. 16 at 6 p.m. at the youth center, Bldg. 2800.

Prospective coaches are needed. If you are interested in coaching, call 255-0950 or 255-2254.

For more information, call 255-2254 or 255-9105.

YOUTH SPORTS FLAG FOOTBALL

Registration for youth flag football continues until Aug. 15. Fort Rucker Youth Sports and Fitness Flag Football is open to both girls and boys. A CYS membership and

current sports physical is required. Eligible ages are 6-12 years old. The age cutoff is Aug. 1 – meaning that a player cannot register if they are older than 12 years old. The fees for the program are \$45. The season will be in September. There will be a parents meeting Aug. 19 at 6 p.m. at the youth center, Bldg. 2800.

For more information, call 255-2254 or 255-9105.

FEDERAL JOB WORKSHOP

Interested in working for the federal government? Mystified by the federal hiring process, or maybe you're just frustrated by your repeated attempts to put together an effective and impactful USAJOBS.gov resume? Then make plans to attend the next federal job workshop with ACS Aug. 14 from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in Bldg. 5700, Rm. 284 with a hands-on breakout session from 1:15-2:15 p.m. This informative and interactive workshop is aimed at getting you the information you need to increase your federal employment possibilities. Participants will receive a free copy of Kathryn Troutman's "Jobseeker's Guide" (7th Edition). Registration is required two days prior to the workshop. Space is limited to the first 60 to register. The workshop is open to authorized patrons only.

For more information or to register, call 255-2594.

NEWCOMERS' WELCOME

The next Newcomers' Welcome is scheduled for Aug. 16 from 9-11:30 a.m. at The Landing. Active duty, spouses, foreign students, Army civilians and family members are all encouraged to attend this informative event. A free light breakfast and coffee will be served. For free childcare, register your



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children at the child development center by calling 255-3564. Reservations must be made 24 hours prior to the Newcomers' Welcome.

For more information, call 255-3735.

BACK TO SCHOOL SKATE NIGHT

What better way to catch up with your friends after summer than skate night Aug. 16 at the school age center? Come show off your best Back2School outfit for your chance to be named Sir Back2School or Lady Back2School. Safety skate is 5-6 p.m. and regular skate is 6-8 p.m. The hourly cost for safety skate is \$5 and \$10 for regular skate – payment is accepted by cash in the exact amount only. Safety skate is open for those that are beginning skaters and those learning to skate, they must be picked up by 6 p.m. Participants must be registered members of child and youth services. For membership information or to sign-up for membership, call parent central services at 255-9638. Registered members with emergency medications must bring all required medications to the SAC to participate in skate night.

For more information, call 255-9108.

YOUTH SPORTS OPEN HOUSE

Launch a passion for a fit and healthy future at the Fort Rucker Youth Sports Fitness Center Open House Aug. 21. Experience firsthand what's available during our grand opening of the new CYS youth sports and fitness program. The grand opening will take place in Bldg. 8950, just down and across the street from the youth and teen center on Seventh Avenue. Come check out the new fitness center, enjoy healthy refreshments, see demonstrations of example workouts and proper equipment usage and pick up great information focused on health and fitness. Youth must have a current CYS membership, a current health assessment/sports physical and be registered in the activity to use the fitness center. Registration is free for youth ages

8-18. For more information, call 255-2257 or 255-2254.

WWII HISTORY EVENT - GUADALCANAL

The Center Library continues the WWII history events with a focus on the battle of Guadalcanal Aug. 22 at noon at Aviation Technical Library. Eric Kaempfer will lead the free presentation that will be open to the public.

For more information, visit the Center Library, or call 255-3885.

OZARK BUS TOUR

MWR Central will host a day trip to Ozark Aug. 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The free, fun and informative bus tour will give participants a chance to enjoy time in downtown Ozark, including photo opportunities, shopping, Ed Lisenby Lake and the Rudd Art Center. The tour will also include valuable information for newcomers on schools, city government and recreational opportunities. People will also be treated to a complimentary lunch at the historic The Holman House. Pre-registration is required. The event is open to ages 18 and over. The tour will include walking to various locations in the downtown district.

Seats are limited. To sign up, call 255-2997. Free hourly childcare is available for

registered CYS patrons – register your children at the child development center by calling 255-2262 at least 24 hours prior to the tour.

RIGHT ARM NIGHT

Leaders, bring your right-hand man or woman out for Fort Rucker Right Arm Night hosted by the 1st Battalion, 14th Aviation Regiment Aug. 29 from 4-6 p.m. at The Landing. Fort Rucker Right Arm Night is an old Army tradition, promoting a night of camaraderie and esprit de corps as leaders come together and treat those standing to their right – the ones helping them get through daily missions. Complimentary appetizers will be served while supplies last. Fort Rucker Right Arm Night will be held every month. Both military and civilians are invited to attend.

For more information, call 255-0768.

EFMP SUPPORT GROUP

The Exceptional Family Member Program Support Group is open to anyone with an exceptional family member diagnosed with autism. It will focus on parent teaching. The EFMP Support Group will be held Aug. 29 from 6-7 p.m. at the Center Library.

For more information, call 255-9277.

SCHOOL STARTS MONDAY!

Be alert for children walking to bus stops and school buses picking up or dropping off.

Slow down, stay off cell phones, and pay attention! Don't be a distracted driver.

Police are strictly enforcing speed limits in housing areas and school zones.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CURB RECONSTRUCTION

Road crews will soon begin curb reconstruction along the area of Andrews Avenue near the Enterprise Gate. People using the Enterprise Gate Aug. 1-14 should expect traffic delays along this route daily from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fort Rucker officials recommend using the Daleville and Faulkner gates as an alternative whenever possible while work is under way. Traffic will be reduced to one lane and drivers are urged to exercise caution as flagmen will be directing traffic.

SAMA INDUCTION

The Fort Rucker Chapter of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Association will hold an induction ceremony Aug. 12 at 1 p.m. at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum. All are invited to attend and honor the association's newest inductees.

CORVIAS SERVICE REQUESTS

There are three ways people can submit Corvias service requests. For the fastest and easiest way to submit a service request, and the best way to reach Corvias directly in case of an emergency or urgent matter, call the Corvias dedicated service request line at (334) 230-5128 or (844) 947-4399, operated 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays-Fridays.

People can also submit service requests online at <https://fortruckerconvias.resident-portal.com>, or people can visit their local community center and speak with a Corvias team member in person. If you're unsatisfied with any part of your experience with Corvias, send an email to CustomerService.Rucker@convias.com or call (401) 228-2800.

RETIREE COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Fort Rucker Installation Retiree

Council meets the first Thursday of each month in The Landing at 11:30 a.m. The meeting is an open forum and all retirees are invited to attend. Retirees are also encouraged to apply for one of the open positions on the council. For more information, call 255-9124.

SIREN TEST

The Installation Operations Center conducts a test of the emergency mass notification system the first Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. At that time people will hear the siren over the giant voice.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETS

Alcoholics Anonymous meets Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at The Commons, Bldg. 8950. For more on the group, call 334-379-8775.

THRIFT SHOP

The Fort Rucker Thrift Shop is open Wednesdays-Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The thrift shop needs people's unwanted items. People can drop off donations at any time in the shed behind the shop (former Armed Forces Bank building) located in front of the theater next door to the bowling alley. Donations are tax deductible.

For more information, call 255-9595.

PTSD GROUP

A post traumatic stress disorder education group meets Tuesdays from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Fort Rucker Spiritual Life Center in Bldg. 8939 on Red Cloud Road. The group follows the Veterans Affairs protocol PTSD Recovery Program and is for anyone interested in learning more about PTSD.

For more information, call 255-3903.

ARMY FLIER

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Fort Rucker Commanding General

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The PAO staff reserves the right to edit submissions selected for publication. For more information about the "Army Flier," call (334) 255-1239.

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